



EL MORRO: GRIM GUARDIAN OF HAVANA HARBOR

# IN THE GREATER ANTILLES

A SKETCH OF OUR CHURCH WORK  
IN CUBA, PORTO RICO AND HAITI

THE BOARD OF MISSIONS

281 FOURTH AVENUE :: :: NEW YORK



**EVENSONG UNDER THE SHADE OF THE PALMS**

*Scattered over the island are many colonies of Americans who welcome the services of the Church*

# IN THE GREATER ANTILLES

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## CUBA

TO understand the nature of the Church's work in the Island of Cuba one must take into consideration its two kinds of civilization; that of Spain at the time of Columbus, and that which prevails today in the most enlightened countries of the world.

For nearly four hundred years Cuba was an isolated colony of Spain, its development stunted by the Spanish policy which forbade colonial production of any commodities the mother country could produce, restricted to the single effort of agriculture, and limited even in this to the production only of sugar and tobacco. Later there was some trade with the United States across the narrow water between Florida and the Island, and possibly wider contact during the English occupation in 1762-1763. That year is notable to us as recording the first English Church services held in Havana.

**BEGINNINGS IN CUBA** The first known service of the American Episcopal Church in Havana was held by Dr. Mahan, of St. Paul's Church, Baltimore. Not permitted to hold a public service, he used a private room in one of the hotels. The thousands of foreigners in business in Cuba were without religious privileges. Seamen on vessels visiting the ports were uncared for, and in the terrible epidemics of disease once so prevalent in the island, thousands were buried without religious rites, in trenches and in unconsecrated ground.

This was the situation which Bishop Whipple, the famous apostle of the Indians, found when he visited Havana in 1871. He was unable to hold a service in the city, as it was against the law. An American man-of-war was kindly offered to him, and here he celebrated the Holy Communion, on Sunday, March 11, 1871. So great was the interest excited by this visit that, by the bishop's efforts, a sum of money was raised from the foreigners resident in Havana for the support of a clergyman.

EDWARD KENNY Though financial support was now assured, the attitude of the Spanish authorities was altogether antagonistic, nor was a cordial welcome to be looked for from the people of Havana and the island generally. It was hard to find a man willing to face these untoward conditions. Finally the Rev. Edward Kenny, a student of Nashotah, was secured by Bishop Whipple, and under the charge of this zealous missionary the work in Cuba was inaugurated.

After four years Bishop Whipple again visited the island and was able to give a most encouraging account of Mr. Kenny's ministry. He had won his way and overcome opposition simply because of his apostolate of mercy. By degrees the sphere of Mr. Kenny's labors was extended from Havana to adjoining towns; missions, too, were established for the negroes on sugar plantations.

As the work in Cuba extended, the amount locally contributed in Havana was no longer adequate to support it, and the Cuban Church Missionary Guild was founded, whose purpose was to care for the foreigners resident in the island, the seamen who visited its ports, and "all the unbaptized and untaught for." Because of its good deeds, the mission attracted the attention of some of the native Cubans and Spanish residents.

Edward Kenny regarded the whole foreign population as his parish. He cared for the sick and dying when yellow fever made Havana the most unhealthy city in the world. Bishop Knight says, "the story of the nine years spent by Edward Kenny in Cuba furnishes one of the thrilling episodes of missionary endeavor." Finally broken in health and harassed by lack of financial support at home, Mr. Kenny was forced to abandon the work and accept a rectorship in the United States.

THE SEED GERMINATING This seemed to be disaster, final and complete, but an unexpected result followed upon Cuba's ten years' war for independence. Cuban exiles in the United States were attracted by the ideals and methods of a Christianity which differed greatly from that of their own country. Some of these, returning, gathered congregations together. Soon six organized missions were reported, with a total list of adherents of 1,650, and when Bishop Young, of Florida, visited Cuba in



1885, as many as 325 candidates presented themselves for confirmation.

Bishop Stevens of Pennsylvania next had oversight of the Cuban field, and organized among Churchwomen a guild for the maintenance of the work there, but aside from one station at Matanzas little of a permanent nature was accomplished.

**ORGANIZED EFFORT** On the death of Bishop Stevens, in 1887, Bishop Whitaker was asked by the Presiding Bishop to take the oversight of Cuba, and the American Church Missionary Society began to make grants and send missionaries. In 1894 the first church structure was built at Matanzas at a cost of \$800. This was the beginning of better things, but no great advance was possible until the war between the United States and Spain was concluded by the withdrawal of the Spanish garrison and the temporary occupation by the American Army.

The destitution caused by the years of warfare was universal, and the primary and immediate obligation was to relieve distress. An orphanage for girls was opened in Matanzas. Other philanthropic work on a smaller scale was begun at other places. In Havana an American congregation was gathered. Steady advance was made in all directions, though much more would have been accomplished if, when in 1901 Cuba was constituted by the General Convention as a foreign missionary district, it had been given direct Episcopal oversight. For some time uncertainty prevailed. The American Church Missionary Society decided to withdraw all its American representatives from the island, and leave the Cuban missionaries, few in number, to carry on the work. Some thought that this program meant nothing less than the entire abandonment of the mission.

But the responsibility was not to be evaded. People and churches in the United States felt it their duty to help the Cubans as much as possible. They felt they should give their Island brethren a different conception of religion than that which had prevailed in the colony for nearly four hundred years. In this work of carrying the Gospel to the Cubans the Episcopal Church naturally has had its share.

# THE NEW DAY AND ITS WORK

Such was the situation in 1904, when Bishop Knight was chosen as Bishop of Cuba. Before he landed in Havana he had secured four volunteers from the ranks of the American clergy, and with them a native Cuban.

The Church's responsibility was of a three-fold character:

I. TO IMMIGRANTS Out of the flux of interior destitution and the vigorous new element of immigration following the war, the Island stirred from virtual sterility to rapid development. Its proximity to and political affiliation with the United States determined the American preponderance of this new vitalizing force, mixed of course with that of the allied English-speaking countries, Canada and England.

The first duty of the Episcopal Church was, and is, plainly, to care for these settlers. Havana offered a natural opportunity as a trade and business center, but aside from that city the greater number of Americans settled in mining and rural districts. A large colony of these English-speaking immigrants settled in the mountains of the Province of Santiago, and began to develop the enormous iron deposits there. They are largely men of education, seeking the most promising fields for their careers as mining engineers, chemists, and so on. Separated from home ties and associations, their work their only vital interest, they found themselves surrounded by an alien civilization, in its transition from old to new ideas and ideals, creating an environment the tendency of which is to drag such men down. The presence of a clergyman of the Church, even though his visits be but infrequent, has a beneficial effect far beyond what people at home can realize. It is a touch of home, stirring memories of associations and habits that have a certain sustaining power.

The sugar estates command another large class of Americans, for Cuba supplies more than half of the sugar consumed in the United States. This industry is gradually getting into the hands of Americans. A certain amount of skilled American labor is employed and the men, and sometimes their families with them, live near



THE RIGHT REV. ALBION W. KNIGHT, D.D.

the mills, separated from all contact with the world they have left. For many months in the year their whole life is their absorption in the great mills which run twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. Even the occasional presence of a clergyman of the Church, who can shake them by the hand, and make them feel that they are not forgotten, does untold good.

A third class of Americans bought land for fruit farms, especially for citrus fruits, both in Cuba and in the Isle of Pines. Here in these colonies is found the family life so seldom scen in the mining and sugar districts. This man is a real pioneer. With wife and children he has left home seeking, in this new and strange country, to better his condition. Such persons find themselves isolated in the midst of a people of very different moral and religious ideals. They need counsel and help, there-

fore the Church must follow them and see to it that they are not lost in or absorbed by their new surroundings. For this it is necessary that we have a resident clergyman, a church, and schools for the children.

In Cuba the public school is taught in Spanish, by Cuban teachers, and the children naturally learn to think in Spanish, and according to Spanish modes. The Church must maintain American schools among these people because, first of all, they have no money. Their whole modest capital is in grape-fruit and orange groves which must begin to produce before their owners can support the better things of life. Furthermore, an organization like the Church can far better assume the responsibility, and can conduct the schools with less friction than could these people, among whom communal interest has yet to be developed.

### BISHOP KNIGHT AND HIS HELPERS      Into these conditions

of adjusting old and new forces Bishop Knight and his volunteers entered, and began their work by holding a conference in Havana in January, 1905, when they drew up the following program: "To seek out the American and English residents, to shepherd the shepherdless of whatever nationality, to provoke to good works the old Church in the island and the different missionary organizations at work in Cuba, to teach Christianity as this Church has received it, without rancour to others, and without apology for our mission."

The response was immediate; many communities in the island petitioned to have the Episcopal Church established among them. The bishop determined to give precedence to the claims of the English-speaking residents; for, as he says, "without the force of example of the English-speaking people the preaching of the Gospel, as these English-speaking people understood it, would lose much of its influence on the lives of the native people."

With this plan in mind, it might be asked, "What has the Church done for Americans in Cuba?" In addition to Holy Trinity Cathedral in Havana, where the services in English are the main services of the Church, there is in La Gloria, where there is an American colony of several hundred families, a church building, a rectory, and a resident clergyman; also, for the American people



resident in this colony, the Church has been conducting a school; services have been regularly maintained for American settlers at Bartle; on the Isle of Pines are seven mission stations with three church buildings, one rectory, and two resident clergymen; in Havana, there is a Cathedral school for girls and a Cathedral school for boys which have been patronized very extensively by Americans. They were started originally for American children. Services for Americans are conducted at Guantanamo City and Guantanamo Naval Station; at the mining camps of Firmeza and Felton; at Paso Estancia, and the sugar estates of Constanica, Preston, Banes and Ensenada de Mora.

## II. THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING NEGRO

The second division of "the day's work" is that which deals with the negro laborer who comes from the British West Indies. The supply of operatives in Cuba is far too small, while in the other West Indian Islands they have more than they need. As a result, the negroes come to Cuba in considerable numbers. Among them are many who are already members of the Episcopal Church, or rather of the mother Church of England.

The care of these people, who are essentially religious and most loyal in their Church affiliations, throws a certain burden upon us. We cannot say to the Church of England, "This is your work, come and do it," because the two Churches do not exercise jurisdiction within the same territory. These blacks, having moved into American jurisdiction, must receive the care of the Church.

What is being done for them? At Guantanamo services are regularly maintained for the black Jamaicans, in a beautiful church building, for which there is a resident priest; in Santiago services are conducted regularly; at Ensenada de Mora also is a resident priest and a fine church building; at Banes, at Preston, at Felton and in Havana, services are held regularly for the large English-speaking negro element. In Guantanamo there is also a school under the fostering care of our Church.

## III. THE NATIVE CUBAN

The third element with which the Church has to deal is the native population of the island. In con-

ducing work among them, no attempt is made to proselytize. One often hears the question asked, "Why is it necessary to send missionaries to a country like Cuba, which has been nominally Christian for four hundred years, and has been under the care of an ancient church?" There are two answers: (a) A large proportion of the population of Cuba is shepherdless; there has been a real lack of interest and religious fervor among both priests and people. It is but a natural result of the circumstances that have obtained in Cuba. The priests have not been dependent upon the people for their living, and the people therefore, not having been under the necessity of supporting their religion (except in a direct payment for certain acts performed for them), have lost interest. It is the old story of people not caring for things which have cost them nothing. (b) It is practically impossible for the old Church, with which they have been dealing in the past, to revive their interest in spiritual and religious things; whereas another Church coming in and representing Christianity from a different point of view, excites their interest, and frequently brings them back into the fold of Christ.

The work therefore of the Episcopal Church among these people is to gather together, as far as possible, those who may come to it as a result of the excitement which has renewed their interest in religious matters, and also to create such an atmosphere as will help the old Church in the Island to do its work more efficiently and faithfully. What the Episcopal Church has done among the native people has come as a direct effect of the work undertaken for the foreign element resident in the island. The natives have witnessed the form of service and the character and nature of the Church's polity, and having seen these things, have themselves, in many places, called for the Church's ministrations. In response to such calls the Church has developed a work which spreads over the whole Island. That there is nothing exotic in the Church in Cuba is proved by the advance in financial support. In this respect there has been a record growth; the value of church property has doubled in the last five years, and the appropriation of the Board of Missions is less than the amount raised in Cuba itself for the support of the work.

SOME RESULTS In nine years' time the Church work has grown from 6 stations to 50 congregations. The communicant list has increased from 200 to more than 1700, and the children in the Sunday Schools from 75 to over 1300. In the parochial schools the pupils have increased from 75 to over 800.

The clergy list of eight years ago showed only two clergymen resident in the Island of Cuba; there are now 24.

As to material gains, nine years ago there were two Church buildings, one parish house and one rectory. At the present time there are twelve church buildings and five parish houses and rectories. The total property values have increased from \$12,000 to \$181,000. The contribution to the support of the work, raised within the island itself, has mounted in the three years since the General Convention of 1910 to approximately \$100,000, while nine years ago the work was not contributing for its own support more than \$1,000 a year. These are evidences of a growth which indicate great possibilities, and also the great need for such work as the Episcopal Church can do. Wherever large results such as these are seen, one can be sure that a great demand has existed, and still exists.

At present the number of communicants and of clergy among the English-speaking people and the Spanish-speaking people is about balanced. But the largest ratio of growth is with the native Cuban element. In a few years the native Church will probably greatly preponderate in numbers.

And this native Church will need, for a long period of time, the financial aid of the Church in the United States. Those who are being reached belong usually to the poorer class. All movements in the nature of revolutions or reformations begin from the bottom, never from the top; those on top are naturally contented with their condition and the circumstances which placed them there.

In the autumn of 1913 Bishop Knight presented his resignation, to become Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South, at Sewanee, Tennessee. At the General Convention of that year two elections failed to secure an acceptance of the bishopric of Cuba. At the present time, therefore, Bishop Knight continues to administer the field.

## PORTO RICO

The Island of Porto Rico came into the missionary field of the Church after its annexation by the United States in 1899. About three-quarters the size of Connecticut, it has the same population. The inhabitants, like those of the other West Indian Islands, are a mixture racially.

In Spanish days the Roman Catholic Church was established. Today all the religions are free in the island. Nominally the entire population was Roman Catholic, but as a matter of fact great numbers of people have no religion whatever. The poorer people are glad to receive the Church's ministrations. They come in great numbers to hear any one who can preach to them in their own language, and are eager to have their children attend Church schools.

During the administration of Bishop Van Buren thirteen missions were established in the principal centers, among them St. John the Baptist, in San Juan. One of the most interesting church buildings on the island is Holy Trinity, Ponce, the oldest non-Roman church building in the Spanish possessions. Constructed originally for members of the Church of England, it was taken over by the American Church after the Spaniards left the island.



HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, PONCE

Through the efforts of Bishop Van Buren a hospital was built in Ponce, and also an episcopal residence at San Juan.

The hospital, after being closed for a year, was reopened in February, 1913. It is well located, well built and thoroughly equipped, with a house provided by friends for the physician-in-charge.





THE RIGHT REV. C. B. COLMORE

After ten years' service in Porto Rico Bishop Van Buren tendered his resignation on account of ill health, April, 1912. Bishop Knight of Cuba temporarily administered the work in Porto Rico till another election could be made.

At the General Convention in New York in October, 1913, Rev. Charles B. Colmore accepted the bishopric of Porto Rico. He was consecrated in Sewanee, Tennessee, Dec. 17, and sailed to his new field in January.

The Church should make a worthy effort to minister both to the American residents of the island and to those of the Spanish-speaking population who are attracted to her services and are impressed by her religious ideals.

The small area with its dense population affords good opportunity for systematic evangelistic work. Our clergy are few, and those who do successful work among Porto Ricans must be able to speak their tongue. A native ministry is best for the native missions, but it should have the balancing influence of clergy from the United States who realize the genius of the Church.



A TYPICAL COUNTRY SCENE IN THE WEST INDIES

## HAITI

Haiti, once a prosperous French colony worked by slave labor, won its independence during the Napoleonic period. Since that time it has had a troubled history, and, like the rest of the West Indian islands, has suffered from economic changes.

Because of its agricultural, mineral and forest wealth, stronger nations are eager to exploit the resources of this island. The population, which is almost entirely of Negro blood, must be enabled to secure the advantages of the progressive world which surrounds them, but as yet only touches them in material ways. The Haitians, if left to themselves, tend to revert to a savage condition. Religion and education are the two plainly defined ways of help. They offer also a proof that the foreigner does not wish to drive him from his home.

An American Negro clergyman, James Theodore Holly, went to Haiti in 1861 with a colony of 111 persons, and soon a missionary organization was

effected. Not long afterward Dr. Holly was elected Bishop and consecrated in New York after a covenant had been made which placed the Haitian church under the Board of Missions, which supported it as "an independent national Church," though it never became independent in any true sense. In January, 1912, after the death of Bishop Holly, the national convocation of that Church voted to relinquish its claim to independent government and asked to be received as a missionary district of the American Church. This was done by the General Convention of 1913, and Bishop Colmore, of Porto Rico, was given charge of Haiti.

At present there are 12 clergy and 29 organized parishes, missions and stations in Haiti.

The Church work in country districts is in better condition than in the cities. The people of the mountains and farms are more responsive to the teachings of the Church, in spite of the prevalence of all forms of superstitions and the presence of certain African cults. Vigorous, well-planned work in these districts would effect wide and lasting results.

The first need is for schools, particularly of an industrial and agricultural character. Only thorough education and practical training in industrial work can bring about the development of national resourcefulness and steadiness necessary to their independence.

We have no schools in Haiti. The Roman Church has a few. The Government schools are inadequate and inefficient. Schools, rather than more mission stations, are the immediate need. These, and a church and a resident clergyman for Port au Prince, are urgently demanded by existing conditions.

#### PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH IN CUBA, PORTO RICO AND HAITI

**A**Lmighty God, on whom the Isles do wait, we pray Thee bless the good endeavors of those who strive to propagate Thy truth, and prepare the hearts of all men to receive it. Give Christian people everywhere a ready will to support all good works undertaken in Thy Name, that the sorrow of the world may be lightened and the bounds of Thy Kingdom enlarged, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

## SUMMARY

The Missionary District of Cuba includes the Island of Cuba and the Isle of Pines. It has an area of 4700 square miles and a population of 2,200,000. For the support of the work, including the salary and traveling expenses of the bishop, the Board appropriates \$46,114 yearly. This appropriation aids in maintaining forty-eight stations. Since 1904 Cuba has been under the charge of the Right Rev. Albion Williamson Knight, D.D. In 1913 he resigned to become the head of the University of the South. Pending the election of a Bishop for Cuba, Bishop Knight has consented to remain in charge.

The Missionary District of Porto Rico includes the island of that name and adjacent islands. It has an area of 3550 square miles and a population of 1,118,012. For the support of the work the Board appropriates \$24,367 yearly, including the traveling expenses of the bishop, the Rt. Rev. Charles B. Colmore, and the retiring allowance of Bishop Van Buren. Work is maintained at thirteen stations.

The Missionary District of Haiti includes the Republic of Haiti. It has an area of 10,204 square miles and a population of 1,118,012. For the work in Haiti, including the traveling expenses of Bishop Colmore, who has oversight of Haiti, the Board appropriates \$7,803 yearly. This maintains work in twenty-two stations.

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*This pamphlet may be obtained from the Literature Department, Board of Missions, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York. Ask for No. 500.*

*All offerings for missions should be sent to Mr. George Gordon King, Treasurer, Church Missions House, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York.*